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ABSTRACT

The knowledge, skills, and attitudes expected of library and information professionals were the focus of a major study that culminated in a work entitled "New Directions in Library and Information Science Education" (1986), commonly called the King Report. This study resulted in the identification of sets of competencies in knowledge, skill, and attitudes that are expected of entry-level and advanced professionals who work in various settings and have various responsibilities in the field of library and information studies. Generic competencies expected across all work settings regardless of specific responsibilities were also identified. For this paper, the recommendations for entry-level professionals who work in various settings and have various responsibilities were extracted and compiled into easily accessible tables. Table 1 presents statistics on knowledge--e.g., alternative approaches to organizing information--expected in academic libraries, public libraries, school libraries, special libraries, information centers, and by database producers. Generic competencies are also noted. Table 2 features knowledge competencies validated as essential for entry level professionals who perform specific functions--e.g., acquisitions--regardless of the work setting. Skills expected to be demonstrated by entry level workers--e.g., anticipating long-range needs of the organization and its users--are presented in Table 3 by professional area. Table 4 displays information about the attitudes--e.g., willingness to take initiative--that are expected across all work settings and responsibilities. (Author/SD)

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An Extraction from the King Report of Entry-Level Competencies Needed by Library and Information Science Professionals

by

Vandelia L. VanMeter

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New Directions in Library and Information Science Education (Knowledge Industry Publications for the American Society for Information Science, 1986) is the result of a major curriculum study completed under the direction of Jose-Marie Griffiths and Donald W. King. It is commonly called the King Report. This lengthy and somewhat controversial study resulted in the identification of sets of competencies in knowledge, skill, and attitude that are expected of entry-level and advanced professionals who work in various settings and have various responsibilities in the field of library and information studies. Generic competencies expected across all work settings, regardless of specific responsibility, were also identified.

The King Report concludes that within the curriculum specializations should be functionally oriented, rather than oriented toward a particular work setting so that professionals can apply their competencies across a wide range of work settings in and out of libraries. It also makes a strong statement that on-the-job training and continuing education are both required to advance beyond entry-level competencies.

This study, which is certain to stimulate discussion among librarians, information professionals, and library and information science educators, may be helpful in allowing faculty and students to examine curricula in terms of its structure and the competencies of graduates. It may also be used in the development of job descriptions, the selection and evaluation of employees, and in assigning responsibilities.

Following are tables based on this study. These four tables provide within seven pages information that is scattered over 46 pages (p. 197-243) in the original work. They address only entry-level competencies. For information on how the study was conducted or on recommendations for mid- and senior level professionals, please examine the complete study.

Entry-level competencies:

Table 1: KNOWLEDGE expected across all work settings
Table 2: KNOWLEDGE expected in various areas of responsibility
Table 3: SKILLS expected across all work settings and responsibilities
Table 4: ATTITUDES expected across all work settings and responsibilities

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TABLE 1

KNOWLEDGE

The Griffiths/King study shows that the entry-level professional in these work settings is expected to have knowledge of:

	Generic Competencies	Academic Libraries	Public Libraries	School Libraries	Special Libraries	Information Centers	Database Producers
Alternative approaches to the organization of information				X			
Alternative approaches to retrieval of information				X	X		
Collection of this institution, and related collections		X	X	X	X		
Costs of materials, personnel, space, etc.	X						
Definition, structure, and formats of information					X		
How to learn on an ongoing basis	X	X	X		X		
Job responsibilities and working conditions (range of duties, probable compensation, benefits, etc.)		X	X		X		
Key projects and personnel in the organization				X			
Mission, goals/objectives of the organization	X			X	X		
Performance expected and how it can be measured	X	X	X		X		
Personnel evaluation, Standards, measures, methods of	X						
Policies and procedures	X	X		X	X		
Primary subject field of users served (e.g., education, medicine, chemistry, law, etc.)						X	
Resource allocation, Methods of	X						
Resources available within the organization (personnel, equipment, etc.)	X	X		X	X		
Structure of the organization and role of the library in the organization				X	X		
User's information needs and requirements, characteristics, and information habits		X	X	X	X	X	

Generic competencies were judged by more than 50% of the participants as essential to each work setting. Thus, in examining the competencies for any work setting one should include all generic competencies. Special emphasis was given to a particular competency if it is checked in both the generic column and the work setting column.

The knowledge competencies validated as essential for entry-level professionals who performed specific functions, regardless of the work setting, are attached.

TABLE 2

ACQUISITIONS
KNOWLEDGE COMPETENCIES

In addition to generic knowledge, entry-level professionals who have acquisitions responsibilities are expected to have a knowledge of:

Acquisition tools and sources of bibliographic information and how to use them
Acquisition methods and techniques, and how to perform them
How to perform the various acquisition activities

CATALOGING
KNOWLEDGE COMPETENCIES

In addition to generic knowledge, entry-level professionals who have cataloging responsibilities are expected to have a knowledge of the:

Cataloging activities that are required to offer the services and produce the products, and how to perform them
Cataloging function, the range of services and products offered (both actual and potential)
Cataloging methods and techniques, and how to apply them
Cataloging tools and sources of bibliographic information, and how to use them
Definition, structure, and formats of information
Users' information needs and requirements

CIRCULATION
KNOWLEDGE COMPETENCIES

In addition to generic knowledge, entry-level professionals who have circulation responsibilities are expected to have a knowledge of the:

Circulation function, the range of services and products offered (actual and potential)
Circulation activities that are required to offer the services and produce the products and how to perform them,
Circulation systems of various types and how to use them
Circulation methods and techniques, and how to apply them
Collection of this institution, and of related collections
Definition, structure and formats of information
Policies and procedures relevant to the library (or information center)
Users of the services and products, their information needs and requirements, and their characteristics and information habits
Various resources available within the library (e.g., personnel, equipment, etc.)

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT
KNOWLEDGE COMPETENCIES

In addition to generic knowledge, entry-level professionals who have collection maintenance responsibilities are expected to have a knowledge of the:

Collection of this institution, and of related collections

Collection maintenance function, the range of services and products offered (actual and potential)

The collection maintenance activities that are required to offer the services and produce the products, and how to perform them

Collection maintenance methods and techniques, and how to apply them

Collection maintenance tools and sources of information, and how to use them

Primary subject field of users served (e.g., medicine, chemistry, law, etc.)

Users of the services and products, their information needs and requirements, and their characteristics and information habits

INTERLIBRARY LOAN
KNOWLEDGE COMPETENCIES

In addition to generic knowledge, entry-level professionals who have interlibrary loan responsibilities are expected to have a knowledge of the:

Collection of this institution, and of related collections

Interlibrary loan function, the range of services and products offered (actual and potential)

Interlibrary loan activities that are required to offer the services and produce the products and how to perform them

Interlibrary loan tools and sources of information and how to use them

Interlibrary loan methods and techniques and how to apply them

User's information needs and requirements

INDEXING/ABSTRACTING
KNOWLEDGE COMPETENCIES

In addition to generic knowledge, entry-level professionals who have indexing/abstracting responsibilities are expected to have knowledge of:

Activities that are required to offer the services and produce the products, and how to perform these activities

Indexing and abstracting functions, the range of services and products offered, (both actual and potential)

Indexing and abstracting methods and techniques and how to apply them

Indexing tools and how to use them

Literacy, numeracy, communications, etc.

Primary subject field of users served (e.g., medicine, chemistry, law, etc.)

Proofreading techniques and procedures

MANAGEMENT
KNOWLEDGE COMPETENCIES

In addition to generic knowledge, entry-level professionals who have management responsibilities are expected to have knowledge of:

Alternative approaches to information management
Alternative approaches to the organization of information
Alternative approaches to retrieval of management information
Alternative management structures and their implications for the operation of the library/section
Available and emerging information technologies and their applications
Career opportunities
Collection at this institution, and of related collections
Completed and ongoing research in the field and its applicability to practice
Contracting process, both in general and within the organization
Cost analysis and interpretation methods
Definition, structure and formats of information
Expanding information community, its participants and their interrelationships (social, economic, technical, etc.)
Evaluation methods and techniques to evaluate systems, services and products
Management activities required to offer the services and produce the products, and how to perform them
Management function, the range of services and products offered (both actual and potential)
Management methods and techniques, and how to apply them
Management tools and sources of information, and how to use them
Operations of other sections in the library or parent organization and how they relate to management
Personnel procedures
Public relations techniques
Users' information needs and requirements, their characteristics and information habits

SERIALS CONTROL
KNOWLEDGE COMPETENCIES

In addition to generic knowledge, entry-level professionals who have serials control responsibilities are expected to have a knowledge of:

Alternative approaches to retrieval of information
Collection at this institution, and of related collections
Definition, structure and formats of information
Serials control function, the range of services and products offered (both actual and potential)
Serials control activities that are required to offer the services and produce the products, and how to perform them
Serials control tools and the sources of bibliographic information, and how to use these tools
Serials control methods and techniques, and how to apply them
User's information needs and requirements

REFERENCE
KNOWLEDGE COMPETENCIES

In addition to generic knowledge, entry-level professionals who have reference responsibilities are expected to have knowledge of:

Activities required to offer the services and produce the products, and how to perform these activities (e.g., conduct reference interviews, analyze user requests, select reference sources, formulate search, etc.)
Collection at this institution, and of related collections
Definition, structure and formats of information
Primary subject field of users served (e.g., medicine, chemistry, law, etc.)
Reference function, the range of services and products offered (both actual and potential)
Reference/referral methods and techniques, and how to apply them
Reference/referral tools and other sources of information, and how to use them
Users of the services and products, their characteristics and information habits

TABLE 3

SKILLS

The Griffiths/King study shows that the entry-level professional in these work settings, or with these responsibilities, is expected to demonstrate the necessary skills so that he/she is able to:

	Generic Competencies	Academic Libraries	Public Libraries	School Libraries	Special Libraries	Information Centers	Database Producers	Acquisition	Cataloging	Circulation	Collection Management	Interlibrary Loan	Indexing/Abstracting	Management	Serials Control	Thesaurus Development	Reference
Anticipate long-range needs of the organization and its users	X																
Apply rules consistently													X		X		
Arbitrate and negotiate														X			
Budget and make projections	X																
Collect, analyze, and interpret data									X					X			
Conduct an interview																	X
Conduct meetings with individuals and groups	X													X			
Design systems/procedures to improve output	X																
Develop and apply criteria for evaluation		X												X			
Establish rapport with users and colleagues		X		X	X					X	X	X		X	X		X
Isolate/define problems; develop the necessary criteria and action for their solution	X		X	X	X				X	X		X		X	X		X
Make decisions and recommendations based on available information	X		X	X	X				X	X		X		X	X		X
Optimize use of resources	X																
Perceive information needs of users													X				
Perceive needs of the organization and not just the library								X						X			
Perform sedentary work													X				
Supervise staff														X			
Work independently and in groups	X	X	X	X													

Generic competencies were judged by more than 50% of the participants as being essential to each function and work setting. Thus, in examining the competencies for any function or work setting one should include all generic competencies as well. Special emphasis was given to a particular competency if it is listed as a competency for a particular function or work setting in addition to being considered a generic competency.

TABLE 4

ATTITUDES

The Griffiths/King study shows that entry-level professionals in these work settings, or with these responsibilities, are expected to demonstrate the following qualities and/or a positive attitude toward:

	Generic Competencies	Academic Libraries	Public Libraries	School Libraries	Special Libraries	Information Center	Database Producer	Acquisition	Cataloging	Circulation	Collection Management	Interlibrary Loan	Indexing/Abstracting	Management	Serials Control	Thesaurus Development	Reference
Ability to see broad picture										X			X	X		X	X
Assertiveness														X			
Attention to detail	X	X		X	X			X									
Cheerfulness										X							
Compassion/Kindness														X			
Confidence					X				X	X	X			X	X		X
Curiosity																	X
Desire to grow professionally				X	X				X	X		X		X			X
Desire to learn/try	X					X											
Desire to remain current in field (specific and general)	X			X	X			X					X			X	
Desire to work to best of ability	X					X		X									
Determination/tenacity	X			X	X			X									
Diplomacy										X				X		X	X
Emotional Stability					X		X		X	X	X			X			X
Enjoy managing/supervising others										X				X	X		
Ethics, Sense of	X		X	X	X			X				X					
Fairness		X	X						X	X	X			X			
Flexibility/versatility	X		X	X				X									
Imagination													X	X		X	X
Inquisitiveness			X						X					X		X	X
Leadership ability														X			
Like children				X													
Like people in general				X	X					X				X			X
Like to help people				X	X					X		X		X		X	

Attitudes (continued)

	Generic Competencies	Academic Libraries	Public Libraries	School Libraries	Special Libraries	Information Center	Database Producer	Acquisition	Cataloging	Circulation	Collection Management	Interlibrary Loan	Indexing/Abstracting	Management	Serials Control	Thesaurus Development	Reference
Like to make others feel comfortable																	x
Like to meet people										x				x			x
Like to work on own				x		x			x	x		x	x	x	x		
Like to work with others/as a team				x	x				x	x	x	x		x	x	x	
Neatness									x								
Objectivity/open-mindedness	x	x		x	x	x		x									
Patience			x	x	x				x	x		x		x	x		x
Political sense														x			
Positive attitude toward job/optimism	x					x		x		x	x			x			x
Promotes library and its services				x						x				x			x
Realizes there is no single "right way" to achieve the goals of the organization													x			x	
Resourceful				x	x				x	x		x		x	x		x
Respect for co-workers/profession	x	x	x		x	x		x		x	x			x			x
Respect for parent organization		x	x		x	x			x	x	x			x		x	x
Respect for users	x						x									x	
Respond to authority/follow policy	x	x	x		x			x									
Sacrifice short-term gains for long-term goals									x					x			
Sensitive to others' needs/thoughtful			x	x	x					x		x		x			x
Service orientation			x	x	x					x		x		x			x
Supportive of co-workers		x		x	x	x				x	x	x		x	x	x	x
Tolerance					x					x	x	x		x			x
Views library as part of a larger information environment									x	x		x		x			x
Willingness to do clerical tasks										x							
Willingness to get hands dirty						x							x				
Willingness to risk failure			x			x							x	x			
Willingness to take initiative				x	x	x				x	x			x		x	x

Generic competencies were judged by more than 50% of the participants as being essential to each function and work setting. Special emphasis was given to a particular competency if it is checked as generic attitude and again under a function or work setting.

ABSTRACT

AN EXTRACTION FROM THE KING REPORT OF ENTRY-LEVEL COMPETENCIES NEEDED BY LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE PROFESSIONALS

The knowledge, skills, and attitudes expected of library and information professionals were the focus of a major study that culminated in a work entitled New Directions in Library and Information Science (1986), commonly called the King Report. From that lengthy study the recommendations for entry-level professionals who work in various settings and have various responsibilities were extracted and compiled into easily accessible tables.

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